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AUTHOR YACOUB, SALAH M.; WASSINK, M. GRAEFF
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ABSTRACT

IN APRIL OF 1967, SOME 166 LEBANESE FARMERS (88 SUNFLOWER PLANTERS AND 78 NON-PLANTERS) WERE INTERVIEWED TO DETERMINE ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SUNFLOWER PROJECT AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS IN GENERAL, AND TOWARD EDUCATION, FARMING, AND VILLAGE LIFE. A TABULATION OF THE RESULTS SHOWED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE FARMERS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THEIR VILLAGES AND THAT THREE-FOURTHS WERE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT WHO WOULD GOVERN THE COUNTRY. REPORTED ATTITUDES WERE VERY FAVORABLE TOWARD EDUCATING CHILDREN, AND SOME PREFERENCE WAS GIVEN TO EDUCATING THE MALES. IT WAS NOTED THAT FACTORS RETARDING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT WERE LACK OF CAPITAL, LACK OF IRRIGATION, AND LACK OF GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT. THE CONCLUSION WAS REACHED THAT AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE ACCEPTED MORE QUICKLY IF LOANS WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE FARMERS. (BD)

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ATTITUDES OF FARMERS TOWARD GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, AND VILLAGE LIFE IN THE NORTHERN BEQA'A OF LEBANON

by

SALAH M. YACOUB and M. GRAEFF WASSINK

Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
Beirut, Lebanon

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ATTITUDES OF FARMERS TOWARD GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION, AND VILLAGE LIFE IN THE NORTHERN BEQA'A OF LEBANON[1]

Salah M. Yacoub[2] and M. Graeff Wassink[3]

INTRODUCTION

This study constitutes the second and final part of the research project entitled "A study of attitudes and motivations of farmers in the Northern Beqa'a concerning the growing of sunflowers in place of hasheesh" (*Cannabis sativa*). The data to be presented will be descriptive in nature and will not be directly related to the growing of sunflowers. The first report (Yacoub and Wassink, 1969) dealt specifically with the factors and sources of information related to the growing of such a crop.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of sunflower growers and non-growers in the Northern Beqa'a of Lebanon toward government, education, and village life. Some comparisons on similar issues will be made between the findings of this study and those of Fetter's study (1961) which was conducted in the Central Beqa'a area of Lebanon.

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(1) Research Project No. 129, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences.

(2) Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon. Responsible for analyzing the data and writing of the report.

(3) Present address, c/o French Embassy, Damascus, S.A.R. Formerly, Associate Professor of Rural Sociology; Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon. Responsible for the development of the questionnaire, selection of the sample, collection and coding of the data.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this report is the same as that used by the authors in their earlier study (Yacoub and Wassink, 1969). Briefly, a sample of 166 farmers were interviewed. Of those, 88 were sunflower planters and 78 were non-planters. The planters' group was selected randomly from the list of 272 farmers in Baalbeck and Hermel districts who applied and signed a contract to plant sunflowers with the main Green Plan Office stationed at Baalbeck. They represented twenty two villages in the Northern Beqa'a of Lebanon.[4] From each of the villages represented in the sample of planters, approximately a similar number of sunflower non-planters were selected. The size of the planters and the non-planters groups in the sample was not determined in proportion to the size of the population in the villages studied because it was impossible to obtain the names and the exact number of farmers in these villages.

The data collected were coded, punched into IBM cards and analyzed through the Computer Center of the American University of Beirut.

ATTITUDES TOWARD GOVERNMENT

The attitudes of respondents toward governmental involvement in the sunflower project and the way government affairs in general are handled were investigated.

Over four fifths of the respondents had favorable attitudes toward government involvement in the sunflower project. They felt that it is a good thing that the work was done partly by government personnel (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' attitudes toward government involvement in the sunflower project, April 1967.

Attitude of respondents	Total No.	Total Percent
Favorable	137	84
Unfavorable	25	16
Total*	162	100

* A total of four respondents did not answer the question and were excluded from the table.

(4) These villages were: Al-Qa'a, Baalbeck, Boudai, Btedi, Chaat, Charbine, Chlifa, Deir El-Ahmar, Douris, Haoche Tel Safieh, Hermel, Iaat, Kneisseh, Laboue, Majdaloun, Maqni, Shwaighir, Taibe, Talia, Taraya, Yamoune, and Younine.

Even though more than four fifths of the respondents seemed to agree that government personnel should do part of the work for them, only about one half were happy with the results of the sunflower project. About two fifths of the respondents felt that they could have done better work than did the government (Table 2). The need for more irrigation and better ways of planting, or both, were very often mentioned as criticisms by those who had unfavorable attitudes toward the results of the project.

Table 2. Respondents' feelings toward the results of government involvement in the project, April 1967.

Feelings of respondents	Total No.	Percent
I could have done better myself	69	41
I could not have done any better	82	49
Do not know	15	10
Total	166	100

When government activities in the area studied were investigated, only about one third of the respondents (57 out of 166) indicated that the government has done something to develop the area. Projects such as providing drinking water, electricity, irrigation, schools, roads, and improving lands were mentioned by a small proportion of the total sample (Table 3). All respondents felt that the government should have carried out more develop-

Table 3. Previous activities carried out in the area by the government, April 1967 (N = 57).

Activity or project	No. of times mentioned*	Percent
Drinking water	12	21
Electricity	16	28
Irrigation	14	25
Schools	10	17
Roads	8	14
Health Centers	3	5
Fertilizers	1	2
Land improvement	7	12
Municipality	1	2

* More than one activity was sometimes mentioned by some respondents which accounted for a total larger than N.

mental projects in the area such as building of schools, health centers, roads, and irrigation canals. They also felt that the government should provide their villages with electricity and drinking water and should help them organize cooperatives, improve their agriculture, and prevent floods.

When respondents were asked "Why the government has not undertaken an operation such as the sunflower project before" about one third said "The government is not giving us sufficient care." Among the other reasons given were: "Village leaders are not effective"; "Deputies neglect us"; and "The government had no money" (Table 4).

Table 4. Reasons given by respondents as to why the government has not carried out such a project before, April 1967 (N = 166).

Reasons given	No. of times mentioned*	Percent
Government is not giving us sufficient care	57	34
Village leaders are not effective	21	13
Deputies neglect us	15	9
Government had no money	13	8
People neglect themselves	11	7
Political reasons	6	4
Do not know	52	31

* More than one reason was sometimes given by respondents which accounted for a total larger than N.

In studying farmers' satisfaction with the way government affairs were handled, Fetter (1961, p. 15) found that 92 percent of his respondents in the Central Beqa'a of Lebanon were either not very well or not at all satisfied. Only eight percent were fairly well or very well satisfied with the manner in which the affairs of the government were handled. In contrast, the respondents of this study seemed to be more satisfied with the way government affairs were handled than were those interviewed by Fetter. About one half of the respondents in the present study expressed their satisfaction while about an equal proportion expressed their dissatisfaction (Table 5).

Table 5. Respondents' satisfaction with the way government affairs were handled, April 1967.

Degree of satisfaction	Total No.	Percent
Very well satisfied	30	18
Fairly well satisfied	51	31
Not very well satisfied	35	21
Not at all satisfied	44	27
Do not know	6	3
Total	166	100

Three fourths of the respondents were indifferent as to who should govern the country while one fourth said that it would make a difference to the country as to who is governing (Table 6). Apparently the majority of

Table 6. Difference it makes as to who should govern the country, April 1967.

Response	Total No.	Percent
It makes a difference	38	25
It makes no difference	115	75
Total*	153	100

* Thirteen respondents gave no answer to this question.

the sample was politically non-participant. A political participation index, in terms of the proportion of people who voted in the five most recent elections, along with other indices, was used by Lerner (1958, p. 57) to measure the degree of modernity in six Middle Eastern countries including Lebanon. Lerner assumed that political participation is associated with modernity. Respondents in this study were not directly asked whether they have voted in the five most recent elections. Their attitudes, though, as to who should govern the country might serve as an indirect measure of their political participation. It is logical to assume that those who were indifferent may not care to vote; while those who indicated that it made a difference to them as to who should govern the country would vote during elections.

The extent that respondents follow or are aware of changes in government may also indicate the degree of their participation in political affairs.

Approximately one third of the respondents followed changes in the government; while two thirds did not follow such changes (Table 7). In addition,

Table 7. Extent respondents follow changes in the government, April 1967.

Extent	Total No.	Percent
Follow changes	50	31
Do not follow changes	113	69
Total*	163	100

* Three respondents gave no answer to this question.

it was found that over four fifths of the respondents did not know the identity of the Minister of Agriculture as compared to about one fifth who did know (Table 8).

Table 8. Respondents' knowledge of the Minister of Agriculture, April 1967.

Knowledge of who the Minister is	Total No.	Percent
Yes	26	16
No	138	83
No answer	2	1
Total	166	100

ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

Fetter (1961, p. 27) reported that the attitudes of most of the Central Beqa'a farmers were favorable toward educating both boys and girls. The present study reveals that the attitudes of the Northern Beqa'a farmers toward education are also favorable. More than nine tenths of the respondents expressed their willingness to send their sons to school or to a university in Beirut if the money were available. Only a very small proportion expressed their unwillingness to do so (Table 9). The attitudes of respondents toward female education were somewhat less favorable compared to their attitudes

Table 9. Respondents' willingness to educate their sons and daughters in Beirut if they had money to do so, April 1967.

Willingness to educate	Sons		Daughters	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Willing	154	93	132	79
Not willing	12	7	34	21
Total	166	100	166	100

toward male education. Only four fifths of the respondents said that they were willing to send their daughters to school or to a university in Beirut if the money were available (Table 9).

Even though the attitudes of the majority of the respondents in this study toward school education were favorable they did not under rate the importance of education through field experience and practical training. Seven out of ten felt that both school and practical training were important (Table 10).

Table 10. Attitudes of respondents toward the importance of school vs. field experience and practical training, April 1967.

Method favored	Total	
	No.	Percent
School education	26	16
Education through field experience and practical training	22	13
Both methods	116	70
No answer	2	1
Total	166	100

ATTITUDES TOWARD FARMING AND VILLAGE LIFE

In a previous study conducted by the authors (Yacoub and Wassink, 1969, p. 21), and in which the same sample of respondents was used, it was found that attitudes toward farming as an occupation, and the farmers' willingness to leave the village and the farm in order to accept a job in the city,

were found to be significantly related to the growing of sunflowers. The present study reveals that about one half of the respondents were not willing to leave the village and the farm to accept a job in the city, while the other half were willing to do so. These findings were in close agreement with Fetter's findings (1961, p. 12) in the Central Beqa'a.

When farmers in this study were asked why they have chosen farming as an occupation, 69 percent said "Because my father was a farmer." Forty two percent indicated that they could not find any other job, while 25 percent gave "I enjoy the work of farming very much" as a reason. Only nine percent felt that they have chosen farming as an occupation because it was the most profitable occupation at that time (Table 11).

Table 11. Reasons given for choosing farming as an occupation, April 1967 (N = 166).

Reasons given	No. of times mentioned*	Percent
My father was a farmer	115	69
It is the most profitable at the moment	15	9
I did not find any other job	70	42
I enjoy the work of farming very much	42	25

* More than one reason was sometimes given by respondents which accounted for a total larger than N.

Nine tenths of the respondents interviewed have resided all their lives in the villages where they now live (Table 12). The remaining one tenth

Table 12. Length of residence in the village, April 1967.

Length of Residence	Total No.	Percent
All my life	148	89
3 — 25 years	8	5
26 — 51 years	10	6
Total	166	100

of the respondents have lived in their villages for periods ranging from3-51 years which is long enough to justify eliciting and interpreting attitudes of Northern Beqa'a farmers toward particular aspects of their physical and

social environments. These aspects include, among others, attitudes toward living in the village, attitudes toward change in village life, attitudes toward the future of young people in the village, attitudes toward village leadership, and their opinions of the main obstacles to the adoption of modern agricultural methods and technology by other farmers.

The farmers' attitudes toward living in villages were mixed. Fifty five percent of the respondents indicated that living in a village was "good" or "very good" compared to 45 percent who felt that living in a village was "not good" (Table 13). It appeared that the attitudes of the Northern Beqa'a

Table 13. Respondents' attitudes toward living in a village, April 1967.

Attitude toward living in the village	Total No.	Percent
Very good	32	19
Good	59	36
Not good	75	45
Total	166	100

farmers toward village life were more favorable than the attitudes of the Central Beqa'a farmers where only 13 percent of them indicated that it was "fairly good" (Fetter, 1961, p. 10).

The reasons given by respondents for their favorable attitudes toward village life include: "I got used to it," "Village life is more agreeable," "Good agricultural production," "Life is cheaper in the village," "Agriculture is an independent type of work," "Relatives are living in the village," and "Strong attachment to the land." Reasons given for unfavorable attitudes include: "Low agricultural income," "Lack of facilities, recreation, and comfort," "No jobs available," "Isolation," "Conflict in the village," and "No government help."

When respondents were asked whether life in the village, in general, had improved or become worse, 74 percent of them said that it had improved compared to 10 percent who felt that it had become worse. Sixteen percent indicated that "It remained about the same" (Table 14). This constitutes an improvement over the situation in the Central Beqa'a where 70 percent of

Table 14. Opinion of respondents as to whether life in village has improved or became worse, April 1967 (N = 165).

Opinions	Total No.	Percent
Village life has improved	122	74
Village life became worse	17	10
Village life remained about the same	26	16

the respondents felt that life in their villages had become worse and only 18 percent felt that it had improved (Fetter, 1961, p. 11).

Respondents' attitudes toward the future for young people in the village among the Northern Beqa'a farmers were more favorable than those of the Central Beqa'a farmers six years ago. Two fifths of the respondents in this study felt that young people in the village have a good future while three fifths said that they do not have a good future (Table 15). This can be

Table 15. Respondents' attitudes toward the future of young people in the village, April 1967 (N = 163).*

Attitude	Total No.	Percent
Future is good	65	40
Future is not good	98	60

* Three respondents did not answer this question.

compared to only 10 percent of the Central Beqa'a farmers who felt that young people have good futures in their villages as far as making a living is concerned. The remaining 90 percent felt that the future of young people was not good (Fetter, 1961, p. 13).

Respondents' perception of a good job and of a good farmer were studied. When they were asked to name the jobs which they consider as being good jobs about one half mentioned "trade" as compared to about one fifth who mentioned "agriculture." Government jobs ranked third and this category was mentioned by 15 percent of the respondents. Only a few considered free professions such as engineers and doctors, industrial jobs, teachers, military, mechanics, and technicians as being good jobs (Table 16).

Table 16. Respondents' perception of a good job, April 1967 (N = 155).*

Type of job mentioned	No. of times mentioned	Percent
Trade	71	46
Agriculture	29	19
Government job	23	15
Any paying job	19	12
Free professions such as engineers and doctors	13	8
Industrial job	5	3
Teachers	5	3
Military	3	2
Mechanics and technicians	2	1

* Eleven respondents gave no answer to this question and were not included in the table.

A good farmer was perceived by three fifths of the respondents as "one who work hard." In addition, about one out of ten felt that a good farmer is "one who admires his land and agriculture." These are thought of by the authors as being traditional ways of looking at farming. A more progressive way of looking at farming is not to consider it as a way of life but as a business which requires constant implementation of new technology and good management. About two fifths of the respondents considered a good farmer as "one who uses new implements on his farm" while one tenth perceived a good farmer as "one who is a good manager" (Table 17). Other charac-

Table 17. Respondents' perception of a good farmer, April 1967 (N = 127).*

Characteristic of a good farmer	No. of times mentioned	Percent
One who works hard	72	57
One who admires his land and agriculture	12	9
One who uses new implements on his farm	49	38
One who is a good manager	13	10
One who gets higher yields	7	5
One who is rich	33	26
One who knows how to cultivate	20	16
One who is helped by government	4	3

* A total of 39 respondents did not know what a good farmer was and they were not included in the table.

teristics of a good farmer were "one who is rich," and "one who knows how to cultivate" which were mentioned by 26 and 16 percent of the respondents respectively.

Village leadership is always considered as an integral part of village life thus investigation of farmers' attitudes toward it seemed necessary. The quality of village leadership in rural areas will, no doubt, affect their development. Village leaders, if they are not effective, must be trained for the job if they are to contribute satisfactorily to rural development. When farmers were asked to respond to an attitudinal question related to the quality of leadership in their own villages, over two thirds felt that their villages had "good" or "fair" leadership, with the majority rating it as being "good" (Table 18).

Table 18. Respondents' attitudes toward village leadership, April 1967.

Attitude toward leadership	Total No.	Percent
Good leadership	92	55
Fair leadership	22	13
Poor leadership	34	21
Little or no leadership	18	11
Total	166	100

The attitudes of the Northern Beqa'a farmers toward their village leadership seemed to be more favorable than the attitudes of the Central Beqa'a farmers toward such social phenomena. Fetter's study (1961, p. 14) indicated that about one fourth of the farmers interviewed in the Central Beqa'a felt that their village leadership was "very good" or "fairly good" with only five percent choosing the former. On the other hand, about one half of Fetter's sample indicated that there was "poor," "little," or "no" leadership in their villages as compared to one third of the respondents interviewed in the Northern Beqa'a for this study who rated their village leadership similarly (Table 18).

The number of people migrating from the villages in the sample seemed to be high. The increasing number of migrants from these villages has reflected the unfavorable attitudes which 45 percent of the respondents had toward living in the village (Table 13). When respondents were asked to

indicate whether they have any of the'r family members who had migrated from the village, about two thirds replied yes (Table 19)

Table 19. Number of respondents indicating having migrants in their families, April 1967 (N = 164).

Having migrants	Total No.	Percent
Yes	101	62
No	63	38

Farmers in the Northern Beqa'a seemed to prefer using informal sources for borrowing money to the more formal ones. Friends, neighbours, and other family members were mentioned by over four fifths of the respondents as preferable sources of getting needed money for their farms compared to about three fifths mentioning commercial dealers and banks (Table 20).

Table 20. Preferred source of borrow'ng money for farm use, April 1967 (N = 166).

Preferable source	No. of times mentioned*	Percent
Friends	73	44
Neighbours	33	20
Family members	33	20
Commercial dealers	35	21
Banks	60	36
Others	8	5

* More than one source was very often mentioned by respondents which accounted for a total larger than N.

In an attempt to discover some of the main obstacles hindering adoption of modern agricultural methods and technology in Lebanese villages, farmers were asked to respond to the follow'ng question: "What, in your opinion, are the main obstacles to the adoption of more modern agricultural methods and technology by farmers here in Lebanon?" An analysis of the responses revealed that "lack of money" was mentioned by three fourths of the farmers interviewed followed by "lack of irrigation" and "lack of government help" which were mentioned by 14 and 12 percent of the respondents respectively (Table 21). Other reasons which were mentioned by smaller proportions of

Table 21. Respondents' opinions of the main obstacles to the adoption of modern agricultural methods and technology by Lebanese farmers, April 1967 (N = 166).

Obstacles	No. of times mentioned*	Percent
Lack of money	124	75
Lack of irrigation	23	14
Lack of government help	20	12
Lack of education	11	7
Lack of equipment needed	4	3
Laziness of farmers	5	3
Lack of good extension service	3	2
Lack of marketing facilities and good market prices	3	2
Old people in the village	2	1

* More than one obstacle was sometimes mentioned by respondents which accounted for a total larger than N.

respondents were "lack of education," "lack of equipment needed," "laziness of farmers," "lack of good extension service," "lack of marketing facilities," and "old people in the village." It can be concluded, therefore, that Lebanese farmers would be willing to accept new agricultural technology if money, in terms of loans, were made available to them.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the main purposes of this study was to investigate the attitudes of the Northern Beqa'a farmers toward government, education and village life. The data which were collected from 166 respondents revealed that only one third of the farmers (N = 57) felt that the government has done something to improve their villages. Another one third blamed the government for not showing concern, while 13 percent of the respondents blamed the village leaders for the lack of projects, such as the sunflower project, in their villages. About half of the farmers interviewed were satisfied with the way government affairs were handled, while the other half were not. Three fourths of the respondents cared less as to who would govern the country

and a large number of them (69 percent) indicated that they were not much interested in changes in government.

The farmers' attitudes toward educating male and female children were very favorable, but some preference was given to male education.

About half of the respondents had a favorable attitude toward living in the village while the other half indicated that living in the village was not good. The majority though, seemed to feel that life in the village has generally improved, but not to the point where they feel that the future there for young people is good. Three fourths of the respondents still feel that young people living in villages had no good future or no future at all.

"Trade" was considered by about half of the respondents as being a good job. This may mean that lack of trading jobs in the rural areas may force people to migrate to urban centers where such jobs are usually more available. Agriculture was considered as a good job by only one fifth of the respondents.

Good management and the using of new implements on the farm were considered as part of the definition which about half of the respondents gave to a good farmer. Hard work was considered by another half as an important characteristic of a good farmer.

Village leadership was, in general, felt to be effective, but it still has room for improvement since about one third of the respondents felt that leadership in their villages was either poor or lacking.

The three main obstacles which seemed to retard agricultural development in the Northern Beqa'a of Lebanon were lack of money, lack of irrigation, and lack of government help and support. It was felt that if government loans were provided to farmers, acceptance of modern agricultural methods and technology may not be a problem.

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